

CHARTER BLM SCIENCE COMMITTEE

Application of science is becoming an increasing issue for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), as it is for other natural resource management agencies. Impacts to existing natural resource condition as a result of phenomena such as desertification and expansion of invasive species, climate change and variability, and the encroachment of development and other human activities into native ecosystems have given rise to ever increasing conflict and concern over management of our natural resources. Challenges to, and lawsuits over, our planning and analysis documents demand that the scientific basis of our decisions be sound and defensible. Science is critical to a number of the BLM's basic natural resource management activities including (1) data collection and analysis, (2) planning, (3) project design and implementation, and (4) determining the effectiveness of our treatments and Best Management Practices. In recognition of the need for increased emphasis and efficiency in the application of science to Bureau natural resource management programs the Executive Leadership Team has decided to re-establish a science strategy for the Bureau and that institution and implementation of the Science Committee is a key component to the success of that strategy.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Science Committee (the Committee) is to coordinate the identification and application of science needs of the BLM; facilitate the exchange of science information and products; and ensure that the BLM's science needs are communicated effectively to science providers, both within and outside of the organization, as outlined in the BLM Operating Plan and the BLM Science Strategy.

The Committee will highlight opportunities to enhance and focus these activities through the prioritization of science needs. Such science needs may include (1) conducting/contracting applied research; (2) synthesizing existing scientific knowledge; (3) developing decision support tools; (4) re-engineering existing work processes; and (5) sharing scientific knowledge with our employees and partners

PURPOSE

The Committee advises the Director/Assistant Directors (ADs) on emerging science issues and needs as identified by the Field and State Offices, and promotes information exchange and the use of science in decision-making Bureau wide. In coordination with the National Operations Center's (NOC) Division of Resource Services (DRS) and the National Training Center (NTC), it facilitates exchange of research results and new science through everyday communications, printed materials, Bureau information storage and retrieval capabilities, and workshops/seminars. The Committee works with the external science community (including other federal agencies, state and local governments, universities, and private organizations) and provides a forum and focal point for interaction and coordination with federal science agencies, such as the U. S. Geological Survey (USGS) and U. S. Forest Service Research and Development (FS R&D). The Committee also functions as staff to the Director/ADs, by providing advice on policy issues,

funding, and science priorities, and assists the Science Advisor in reviewing the BLM science issues and initiatives.

OBJECTIVES

The Committee facilitates identification of science needs, serves as a forum for discussing science issues common to the BLM offices, and exchanges ideas and information about new technologies. The group facilitates the development of strategies and mechanisms to distribute new information to the BLM managers and serves as an advocate for advancing science at both regional and national levels. The Committee ensures that the science needs identification and tracking processes are linked to the BLM's Budget Planning System and other budget and performance planning and tracking systems, as appropriate. Individuals on the Committee provide feedback to State Office and National Program Leads on science needs important to the field and provide advice on emerging science issues to senior management and National Program Offices. The Committee works with the NOC on information acquisition, exchange/technology transfer, database applications, and the potential use of new scientific knowledge and research results.

GUIDELINES AND DECISIONMAKING

The Committee reports to the Director through the AD, Renewable Resources and Planning. The Committee is guided by a 2-year Plan of Work that will translate the BLM Operating Plan and Science Strategy into the foundation for the application of science within the organization. The Plan of Work will be updated annually. Committee decisions are made by consensus of the Committee members present.

MEMBERSHIP

The Committee is comprised as follows:

- Deputy AD, Renewable Resources and Planning;
- Deputy AD, Fire and Aviation
- Deputy AD, Energy, Minerals, Realty and Resource Planning;
- Division Chief, DRS;
- Director, NTC;
- Deputy Director, National Landscape Conservation System;
- National Science Coordinator;
- Associate State Director (ASD) – appointed by the Field Committee;
- Deputy State Director (DSD) – appointed by AD 200;
- District Manager – appointed by AD 200;
- Field Manager – appointed by AD 200;
- BLM Budget Officer

The ASD, DSD, District Manager, and Field Manager representatives are appointed for terms of 2 years. The candidates for the DSD, District Manager, and Field Manager representatives are nominated by their State Directors in response to a call for nominations by AD 200.

The Committee will be assisted by the following advisors:

One representative from the USGS

One representative from FS R&D

The Science Advisor serves as the Committee Chairperson. The duties of the Chairperson are to coordinate the meetings and agenda; receive assignments from the Director/ADs and Field Committee and report back to the assignor; nominate members for subcommittee assignments; and represent the positions of the Committee to senior BLM officials. A Co-Chairperson is selected by the Committee to serve as the back-up to the Chairperson.

STAFFING

The Committee will rely upon AD 200 for staff support. Staff duties include distributing pre-meeting materials, arranging for meeting logistics, recording and distributing meeting notes, maintaining membership and mailing lists, maintaining the records of the Committee, and other support activities to help the Committee Chairperson follow through with assignments, correspondence, and other Committee duties.

The State Science Coordinators, Regional Science Coordinators, and Joint Fire Science Coordinator serve as a standing subcommittee to the Committee. The Committee establishes appropriate working groups to address issues and tasks as they arise. In addition to their other duties, the DRS serve as support to the Committee.

MEETING SCHEDULE

The Committee meets as needed, normally on a semiannual basis. At a minimum, meetings are scheduled in mid February to early March to provide input to the preparation of out year budget proposals, and late October to early November to prepare accomplishment reports and review science priorities for the coming year. Periodic teleconferences are held to address issues between meetings. As needed, working groups may meet at any time to work on specific Committee tasks.

Approved

Director, Bureau of Land Management

Date